

Consider non-toxic alternatives...

- All-purpose Cleaner-**Most all-purpose cleaners contain ammonia or chlorine. Another choice is to mix one gallon of hot water with one quarter cup of vinegar. Sprinkle baking soda if surface needs to be scoured.
- Drain Cleaner-**The active chemical in drain cleaners is lye, which is corrosive and hazardous. As a preventative, or if a drain becomes clogged, pour one quarter cup baking soda followed by one half cup of vinegar. After the fizzing stops, flush well with boiling water.
- Air freshener-**Instead of using chemical products, leave open a box of baking soda in a room.

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTES AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

Solid waste management districts in Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties operate household hazardous waste programs. The programs educate the public about such waste and make available safe and acceptable disposal options for household hazardous waste.

If improperly disposed of, these wastes could threaten human health or the environment. The programs disseminate information to residents of both counties regarding proper methods of disposal for household hazardous wastes.

Residents of St. Joseph County and surrounding counties are allowed to use the disposal service, as long as the waste material was residentially generated. Obsolete electronics may be dropped off for free or \$12 for larger items. Tires may also be dropped off for \$1. The address for the Household Hazardous Waste collection site is: 1105 East 5th Street, Mishawaka, Indiana 46544. They are open Tuesday–Saturday, 8:30am-3:30pm.

Elkhart County residents may take household hazardous waste to the Borden Waste-Away Services in Elkhart the first Saturday of every month from 8am to 3pm. The facility is located at

West Beardsly and Wildwood in Elkhart.

For more information, call:

Elkhart County Solid Waste Management District (574) 293-2269

St. Joseph Solid Waste Management District (574) 235-9971

Once waste materials are dropped off at the collection site, they are recycled or reclaimed whenever possible. When this isn't possible, they are disposed of in a manner to minimize the impact on the environment.

Wastes that can be disposed of include: Waste oils (engine, lubricating), paints and solvents (paints, stains, finishing, oils, thinners,), pesticides/herbicides (grass and weed killer, insect killers, garden chemicals), poisons (mouse and rat killers, roach and ant killers), waste fuels (charcoal lighter, fuel oil, gasoline) aerosols (spray paint, insect killers), batteries (auto, truck, motorcycle, household), corrosives (lye, cleaning acids, drain cleaners), and miscellaneous fluids (bleaches, pool chemicals, metal cleaners, spot remover, and furniture polish).

CLEAN AIR QUICK FACTS

What is Ozone?

Ozone is a gas that is “good up high, bad down below.” It is composed of three oxygen atoms (the oxygen we breathe has only two). That extra oxygen atom makes ozone unstable and reactive. Up high, ozone acts as a filter, protecting us from the sun’s rays and filtering out cancer-causing radiation.

Down below, at ground-level, ozone acts as a deteriorating agent. It breaks down substances like paint, rubber and even living organisms. Ground level ozone is not healthy for humans and animals to breathe. On particularly hot, calm days when there is no rain or wind forecasted, ground level ozone is formed when chemicals in the air react under the sun’s heat.

Who is affected by ground level ozone?

Every person can be affected by ground level ozone, but some people are especially sensitive to high levels of ozone. Elderly people, children, pregnant women, and people with heart or lung conditions are sensitive to high ozone levels. Even people exercising are more sensitive.

What is an Ozone Action Day?

Every day during ozone season-April through September-the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) receives information from IDEM on the ozone conditions for the next day. Based on weather patterns, IDEM may call an Ozone Action Day because the conditions are right for high, unhealthy levels of ozone to be produced. MACOG notifies local TV and radio weather persons the day before an Ozone Action Day, so there is time to prepare your clean air actions.

What Can Be Done?

- Walk, ride your bike or take the bus to work or to run errands. If you have to drive, try to fill up before 7am or after 7pm.
- Wait to mow your law until late evening. Avoid using other gasoline-powered outdoor tools like chainsaws and trimmers.
- Use non oil-based paints, solvents, or varnishes. If you have to, keep them covered between uses.
- Use an electric starter or charcoal chimney when grilling.
- Conserve energy to reduce energy needs from powerplants-keep drapes and blinds closed while running the A/C and try not to excessively cool a room or building.
- Watch or listen to your favorite weather report so you can be prepared for an Ozone Action Day.

**Information provided by the MACOG 2002 Summer Newsletter, used with permission.*

SEPTIC SYSTEMS-MAINTENANCE AND CARE

The following is information from a new video tape which has been produced by the Michiana Area Council of Governments, or MACOG, and a brochure entitled, “Septic System Care and Maintenance Guide” provided by the Home Builders Association of St. Joseph County. More information can be obtained from these organizations.

A septic system is a device designed to handle wastewater generated from a home or business, when city sewers are not available. A septic system breaks down the impurities of the wastewater, and then allows the water to re-enter the ground. The system is comprised of a main pipe connecting the building with a tank, and pipes leading away from the tank to the “absorption field.”

Those with septic systems are encouraged to remember three basic rules:

1. Be careful of how much you put into the septic system at once;
2. Be careful of what you put into the septic system at once; and
3. Maintain a regular schedule for having your septic system pumped.

With regard to the first rule, try to space out household water use. For example, don't run the dishwasher, do laundry, and take a shower simultaneously. All that water entering the system at the same time is bad for a septic system.

With regard to the second rule, just because it can go down a drain doesn't mean it should. For example, don't flush paper diapers, paper towels, feminine hygiene products, or cotton balls. It's better not to flush facial tissue or food waste produced by a garbage disposal. It is preferable to put such items in the trash.

In the septic tank the solid material settles to the bottom and slowly begins to break down. The

watery liquid on top flows to a “distribution box” and is distributed to the absorption field through pipes. These distribution pipes have little holes which allow water to trickle out into the soil, which filters and cleans the water. Soil conditions and other factors may require a more complicated system.

It is important that the holes in the distribution pipes do not become clogged from a build-up of solids flowing with the liquid from the tank. The natural breakdown of solids in the tank can be slowed by harsh cleaning agents, chemicals, petroleum products, salts, and other toxins drained into the system. Also, such materials may pass through the distribution pipes and into the soil, without being properly filtered by the soil. Household hazardous wastes should be collected by homeowners and taken to the solid waste management district processing areas.

With regard to the third rule, over time solids will build up in the tank in the septic system that either won't break down or will have broken down as far as possible in that environment. Pumping the tank is then needed, or serious problems may result. Every two years is considered an average pumping schedule, but heavy water use or use of a garbage disposal may require more frequent pumping. Some homeowners pump annually or even more often than that. The size of the tank, age of the system, type of soil, number in the household, and the amount of water usage all have direct effects on a septic system and pumping schedule.

The three simple rules described above reflect the adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

According to the Home Builders Association of St. Joseph County (HBA), a septic system should never go more than 36 months between cleanings. Getting your septic system properly cleaned every one to three years is much less expensive and easier to plan for than an unexpected \$2,000 to \$10,000 repair bill.







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Dear Friends,

Fall 2002

Assisting in the development of properties which have pollution problems is the purpose of Indiana’s ‘brownfields’ program. Allowing such land in a city to become productive again increases the tax base which benefits homeowners, and helps with job growth.

This newsletter provides information about our ‘brownfields’ program, and about other environmental issues as well. Concerning septic systems, information is available from the Home Builders Association and the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). These organizations can be reached using the information below:

Home Builders Association of St. Joseph Valley
Phone: (574) 258-0411
Email: hbaofstjoevalley@aol.com

Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG)
Phone: (574) 674-8894
Email: macogdir@macog.com

I hope this information is helpful. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. It is an honor to serve you in the Indiana Senate.

Sincerely yours,

Joe

State Senator

JOE ZAKAS



An Update on Environmental Issues

- INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
- Household Hazardous Waste
- Ozone Quick Facts
- Septic Systems
- Indiana’s River Friendly Farmer Program
- Need brownfield technical information?
- IDEM Technical and Educational Assistance
- Gabriele H. Hauer, Section Chief
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(317) 233-2773
www.in.gov/idem/land/ brownfields/index.html
- Need brownfield financial information?
- Indiana Development Finance Authority
- Calvin Kelly
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www.state.in.us/idfa

INDIANA’S BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

According to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), a “brownfield” site is an industrial or commercial property that is abandoned, inactive or under-utilized due to actual or perceived environmental contamination. IDEM has a mission to make Indiana cleaner and healthier by converting brownfields into appealing, valuable property by helping communities remove barriers to sustainable growth.

The development of brownfields creates good-paying jobs and improves a city’s tax base. Indiana can greatly benefit by encouraging companies and businesses to develop brownfields, even though developers may be attracted to a “greenfield site” outside city limits to avoid possible environmental problems which may exist at urban locations. The Indiana General Assembly has passed legislation to assist in the development of brownfields. IDEM’s Brownfields Program is supported by legislation that allows for the provision of services and the distribution of funds to communities for assessment and cleanup of brownfield properties.

Federal Brownfield Programs

The Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act, which was passed in December of 2001, specified the provision of grants for assessment and cleanup of brownfield sites across the country. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced the tentative schedule for the proposal submission



The Uniroyal demolition site in Mishawaka received a grant from Indiana’s Brownfields Program.

and selection process for this new funding. Only one application is necessary for all grant programs. Only those applicants whose initial proposals are determined by EPA to be the highest ranking will be invited to prepare more detailed Final Proposals. The intent of this two-step process is to reduce the burden on applicants. The tentative schedule for the award process is as follows:

October 1, 2002 – Federal Register Notice
November 2002 – Initial Proposals Due
January 2003 – Invitations to Prepare Final Proposals
February-March 2003 –Final Proposals Due
May-June 2003 – Selections Announced
Awarded funding will be available for use in October 2003.

(This schedule is subject to publication of final grant guidelines.)

For more information on the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act or the new federal brownfield grants, visit www.epa.gov/brownfields.